

the command of a superb leader who has my confidence.

Congratulations, Tom, and thank you for serving our country.

Secretary Ridge. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. The related Executive order of January 23 on actions in connection with the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's Radio Address *January 25, 2003*

Good morning. This coming Tuesday, I will deliver the State of the Union Address to Congress and the American people. Our Nation faces many great challenges all at once. We will meet all of them with courage and steady purpose.

In 2003, we must work to strengthen our economy, improve access to affordable, high-quality health care for all our seniors, encourage compassion at home and abroad, and defend our Nation against the threats of a new era. The war on terror is an ongoing priority for our Nation. We will take every measure that is necessary to protect the American people from terrorist groups and outlaw regimes. The world depends on America's strength and purpose, and we will meet our responsibilities for peace.

Today I want to speak to you about a few key domestic priorities. When I address Congress, I will urge them to pass my plan to strengthen our economy and help more Americans find jobs. The tax relief already planned for later in this decade should be made effective this year, including income-tax reduction, marriage penalty relief, and an increase in the child tax credit. When Congress acts, I will direct the Treasury to return this money to taxpayers right away, which will provide immediate help to our economy.

We can also lay the foundation for future prosperity by encouraging investment and helping Americans to prepare for the new

jobs a growing economy will bring. I will ask Congress to eliminate the unfair double taxation of dividends and raise the deduction limit for small businesses that invest in new machinery and equipment. And to help unemployed workers find a job as soon as possible, I propose new reemployment accounts. These accounts will assist with the cost of finding work, including training and child care and moving expenses, and provide a cash bonus to workers who find a job quickly.

Strengthening and improving Medicare is also a priority for my administration in the coming year. I will urge Congress to join me in keeping our commitment to America's seniors by working to modernize Medicare and include a prescription drug benefit to help seniors who are squeezed by rising drug prices.

As a prosperous nation, we have an obligation to help Americans who are struggling to build better lives for themselves. So I will propose new initiatives to bring the work of faith-based and community groups to the needs of our fellow citizens. All of these priorities will be reflected in the budget I submit to Congress in early February.

As we fund important priorities, however, we must also practice spending discipline in Washington. Spending restraint is important to economic growth and job creation. And it is critical to reducing the deficit caused by war and national emergency and

recession. Under my budget, discretionary Federal spending will rise by 4 percent, about the same as the increase in family incomes. Government should not grow faster than workers' paychecks. Government should follow the example of American families by setting priorities and staying with them.

In this session of Congress, we must work to make our Nation safer, more prosperous, and more compassionate. I look forward to working with the Republicans and Democrats in this important year for

America and the world. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:03 p.m. on January 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting *January 28, 2003*

The President. Thank you for coming. I'm going to make a quick statement, and then I will ask you all to leave without any questions.

Q. With questions?

The President. No, without any questions. I appreciate your understanding.

First, I want to welcome Tom Ridge, newly confirmed member of my Cabinet. I appreciate the Senate moving quickly. I asked the Senate to move quickly on the nomination of John Snow as well. He's having his hearing today. They'll find that John is a very capable, smart person who will do a fine job as the Secretary of Treasury. I look forward to having him join us here at this table.

Tonight I'm going in front of our Nation to talk about the great challenges that face our country, but no doubt that we'll be able to handle those challenges because we are a great country. I'll talk about our deep desire for peace, peace not only here at home but peace in troubled regions of the world. I'll talk about our plan to spread

prosperity throughout America. I'll talk about the need to have a health care system that is modern and sensitive to the needs of our seniors.

I'll talk about a lot of issues, but as I do so, I'm going to remind the American people that solutions to some of the seemingly intractable problems lay in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens; that not only are we a strong nation, I will say, but that we're a compassionate nation, and when we find hurt and people who need healing, that our fellow citizens can provide the love necessary to help a citizen realize the full potential of this country.

I look forward to giving this speech. It is a moment where I will rally the American people to some great causes and remind them that we'll accomplish those causes together.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.